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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
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Dear Consumer:

In a recent Order, the Public Utilities Commission applied the standard offer "opt-out" fee statewide. As a result, starting May 1, leaving standard offer service once you have purchased electricity supply from a competitive provider and later shifted to standard offer may require you – in certain circumstances -- to pay a substantial "opt-out" fee. Please review this letter and the enclosed material for an explanation of when – and why – the opt-out fee applies.

The opt-out fee applies to medium and large non-residential customers who purchase from a competitive supplier, then take standard offer service, and return to the competitive market without remaining on standard offer for at least 12 months. Customers who have not previously purchased from a competitive supplier may leave standard offer any time without an opt-out fee.

These rules are not intended to discourage you from switching to competitive service, or to a different competitive provider. They are aimed at stopping "gaming" of the standard offer. "Gaming" is periodic switching from competitive service to standard offer and then back to take advantage of seasonal or other price differentials. Because this behavior drives up the cost of providing standard offer service, it increases standard offer prices, and therefore must be discouraged.

The opt-out fee applies regardless of how briefly the customer is on standard offer. Therefore, when switching suppliers you should be sure that you are not without competitive service for any time, even a day, because this brief entry to standard offer service will trigger the opt-out fee. The opt-out fee is twice your highest monthly supply charge for your most recent period on standard offer service.

You may be eligible for a waiver if you accidentally trigger the opt-out fee, for example by entering standard offer service for only a few hours or days while switching from one competitive supplier to a new competitive supplier. To learn more about filing a waiver request, see the enclosed *Opt-Out Fee Frequently Asked Questions* sheet.

We encourage you to explore your competitive options by contacting suppliers licensed to serve your area. Competitive suppliers may be able to offer you better prices, terms and features than standard offer. A list of competitive suppliers is available at [www.state.me.us/mpuc/Electric\\_Supplier/licensees.htm](http://www.state.me.us/mpuc/Electric_Supplier/licensees.htm) or by calling the PUC at 1-877-PUC-FACT. Please note, however, that we are not necessarily suggesting you sign a contract now; each customer must decide on his or her own what is right for his business. While we encourage you to explore your options, if you decide to switch, you should be careful to time your switch to avoid the opt-out fee.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

**Maine Public Utilities Commission**